

Statement by the United States National Student
Association - 13 Feb 1967

It has come to our attention that the March issue of Ramparts magazine will include a lengthy story alleging a relationship between the International Commission of the National Student Association and the Central Intelligence Agency. The officers of USNSA first learned of the story through Mr. Michael Wood, a former employee of the Association and through direct approaches by members of the Ramparts' staff. At one point Ramparts offered USNSA its mailing list for fund-raising purposes if its officers "corroborated its story. and threatened "the destruction of USNSA" if its officers failed to do so. Since these initial conversations numerous past employees of USNSA have been presented with similar offers. Many have been asked "to clear themselves" or suffer personal attack in the article.

We do not know the specific allegations of the Ramparts' article. It is important, therefore, to determine the truth or falsity of specific charges. It is true that a relationship between NSA and the Central Intelligence Agency has existed for a considerable period of time. It is important that the exact nature of this relationship be publicly defined to prevent the malicious damage to the integrity of individuals or organizations which will result from erroneous speculation. It is also important that the attitude of the leadership of the NSA be made clear, and that the actions of the leadership over the past two years to terminate this relationship be brought to light.

The exact nature of the relationship has been:

1. The officers of the association did know that funds were received which originated from the CIA.

2. Individual employees or officers of the association did at no time, and we state this emphatically serve any "intelligence" function.

No information of a sensitive nature was ever made available to any government agency.

3. NSA did on any number of occasions present its views to the U. S. Government. ~~I~~ It insisted strenuously on these views, often to the detriment of its own popularity in government.

In the early 1950's USNSA and the United States Government agreed it to be in the best interest of all involved to make it possible for American students to be represented abroad and to work with student groups in emerging countries. At that time it was important to obtain funds from private groups to support these goals.

During this period the officers of the association felt that the existence of heavily financed and totally controlled Soviet front organizations in the international student field made it imperative that the democratic and progressive organizations maintain a presence abroad which would offer an alternative.

In the past two years the officers have believed that these conditions have changed so that they do not justify the existence

of a covert relationship with government agencies, that such a relationship is inconsistent with the democratic, open nature of USNSA. An obligation of trust to the students of the nation and our own personal principles demanded that such a relationship be terminated, and that all sources of funds be open.

The leadership of the Association has always sought alternative sources of funds for its international activities. Over the past two years the officers have felt that it was imperative to rely exclusively on such alternative sources. The Government has agreed with our views and has cooperated fully in our efforts.

Those of us who have devoted a year of service to the National Student Association have not been engaged in intelligence activities, but have been committed to the improvement of the American university and to the furtherance of the cause of students. In our dealings with campuses in this country and with students abroad we have tried to be open and honest as to our positions, our programs, and our goals. We have felt that these qualities are essential to our organization's strength.

Indeed, it is these qualities which have attracted thousands of students in our member campuses, past and present, to the National Student Association. We have insisted that delegates to our congresses be elected or appointed according to democratic procedures on each campus. We have taken pains to ensure free and open debate at all

meetings conducted by our organization. The positions of our congress are published for anyone to read; the mandates of the constituency are carried out by officers and staff under the direction and control of the National Student Congress and the elected National Supervisory Board.

USNSA was the first student organization to oppose McCarthyism in the 1950's. We have urged complete academic freedom on the campus and freedom of speech in the public. We have urged abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and repeal of the McCarran and Smith Acts. In every area, we have upheld the right of citizens to civil liberties and the responsibility of citizens to maintain integrity in their beliefs.

Further, the integrity of the delegates to the Congress has often led them - as the real voice of NSA - to uphold positions which subjected the organization to attacks in the 1950's. At a time when the country's foreign policy reflected an anti-Communist fervor insensitive to the needs of many areas of the world, USNSA supported a nuclear test ban treaty, the development of democratic institutions in Spain, Portugal, and other autocratic countries whether in the East or West, an end to colonialism, abolition of apartheid, and improved relations between East and West.

At times when domestic policy was insensitive to the needs of many segments of our society, USNSA supported Civil Rights, broad programs

of social welfare, the development of community organization, and a number of other steps necessary to the alleviation of suffering in our society. For these stands and the programs which developed out of them, we have ^{been} the main target of the student and professional Right which has launched a major campaign to destroy us. We have survived these attacks as well as ~~we have~~ the attacks of the extreme left both domestic and foreign. Extremists of all kinds have attempted and are attempting to destroy the Association precisely because it has maintained since its inception its integrity as the representative of the highest aspirations of the American student community. Yet the battle has been far from easy.

What we need now is support, not simply for NSA but for the needs of students. For years we have heard that ours is the most exciting generation in history. Our organization has tried to fulfill the highest aspirations of that generation, even in the face of strenuous attacks. Our ability to survive and to succeed depends upon the support of those students whom we have tried to serve. We are confident of that support. Yet it also depends upon the commitment of those who say they applaud the activities of youth to support those activities directly. Now is the time to do so.